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The Washington Monument Fairmount Park

Dedicated May 15, 1897

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

GREEN STREET ENTRANCE

FAIRMOUNT PARK

PRESENTED TO THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

BY THE

STATE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

DEDICATED

MAY 15th, 1897

OFFICE OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF FAIRMOUNT PARK

CITY HALL, ROOMS 127-129

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ALBERT ANDERMAN
SEVENTH & FILBERT STREETS
PHILADELPHIA

ONE of the most important and imposing monuments ever erected in America is the equestrian statue of George Washington, which has been presented to the City of Philadelphia by the State Society of the Cincinnati, standing at the Green Street entrance of Fairmount Park.

In the year 1783 the officers of the Revolutionary War, wishing to form some means "to perpetuate their friendship and to raise a fund for relieving the widows and orphans of those who had fallen during the war," organized the Society of the Cincinnati. In after years this Society grew into a social organization of great strength and prominence.

They began in 1810 to raise a fund of $150,000 to build a monument to their first President, Commander and Friend, George Washington, but with the excitement, troubles and hard times following the war of 1812 this movement was stopped temporarily. When Lafayette visited this city in 1824, the absence of any monument caused some adverse criticism and the citizens in a fervor of patriotism started to raise a new fund, which was soon forgotten but was revived in 1832, on the one hundredth anniversary of Washington's birth.

The fund of 1810 had in 1880 grown into $137,000, owing to judicious investments; likewise the fund of 1824 and 1832 by careful husbandry had grown into $50,000. The union of these funds, together with their further increase by investment and donations, now formed the money to pay for this splendid memorial, costing in all over $250.000.

The design is one made by the celebrated German sculptor, Rudolph Siemering, and represents an equestrian statue of General Washington, on an immense pedestal of bronze placed on a granite platform or base, forming the most imposing as well as costly monument ever erected to any American, with but the single exception of that monument of the same name at the National Capitol.

The figures and ornaments are all in bronze, and the monument as it now stands is forty-four feet high.

The base of this monument is oblong in shape, 61 x 74 feet, built of pink Swedish granite, having thirteen steps, symbolical of the thirteen original states. At the corners are fountains representing the four great American rivers, the Delaware, Hudson, Potomac, and Mississippi, with allegorical figures of Indians immediately at

hand. These fountains are guarded on either side by native animals as the Moose, Elk, Bison and Bear, all in bronze.

These four fountains, almost complete in themselves, form, as a whole, one of the most unique and attractive finishes for a base ever designed.

The Hudson River fountain has on either side a superb moose, it being native game and once so plentiful throughout New York and the New England States. At the rear of the fountain is a reclining figure of an Indian woman, represented as having returned from fishing, holding a seine, while lying around her are a pike, flounder, and a fine salmon, together with sea shells, cat-tails and aquatic plants.

The Delaware River fountain has on each side magnificent bronzes of the king of the plains, —the bison. An Indian chief, decorated with

eagle feathers in his hair, and a string of wild animal teeth for a necklace and skins around his loins, lies on a skin, holding his trusty bow and arrow, while a skull at his feet and an eagle hung around his neck show very clearly his prowess.

The next fountain represents the Potomac River with a fine elk on either side. It, too, has a bronze figure at the back—an Indian squaw holding a paddle. At her feet are some water lilies and crawling around her is a huge snake.

At the fourth fountain, the Mississippi River, we have on the right a large steer, on the left a bear with a horse's head between his paws, showing that it is just finishing a meal. Immediately back of these is another figure of an Indian holding in his hand a trident or harpoon, and a dead alligator shows that he too has been successful in the hunt.

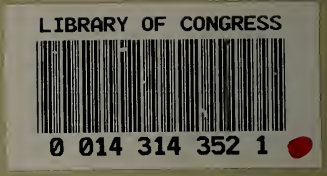
From the platform rises a granite and bronze pedestal some seventeen feet high, while as a crown is the bronze equestrian statue of General Washington in the uniform of the Revolutionary Army, holding in his hand a pair of field glasses. A large military cloak is thrown over his shoulders and falls well over his horse.

At the front of the pedestal is an allegorical group representing America, seated, holding a trident and cornucopia. On either side is a figure, one holding a scroll, the other offering a wreath. Broken shackles show that they have thrown off their slavery and have gained their freedom. Below is an American eagle supporting the arms of the United States.

The group at the back is another bas-relief of America, holding in her hands two spears and a sword, showing her sons their condition of slavery and rousing them to go forth to liberty.

At her feet are two men, representing her sons, one holds in his hand a shovel; the other a musket, showing that for the time peaceful pursuits must be given up for the struggles of war; beneath this group are the arms of Pennsylvania.

Bronze bas-reliefs are on either side of the pedestal, one representing the march of its army, the other that of a west-bound emigrant train. Over these groups are engraved the names Smallwood, Sterling, Moultrie, DeKalb, Putnam, Wayne, Warren, Nash, Steuben, St. Claire, Schuyler, Kosiusko, Morgan, Sullivan, Lincoln, Irvine, Kirkwood, Jay, Cadwalader, Dickinson, Muhlenberg, Haslet, Jefferson, Mercer, Franklin, Mifflin, Hamilton, Varnum, Pinkney, Hazeh, Clinton, Barry, Jones and Dale. Immediately under the statue and running around the pedestal are the words, "Erected by the State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania."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